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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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RELEASE DENIED

JUL 13 1 33 PM '65

FROM : Department of State

SUBJECT : Public and Congressional Support for US Viet-Nam Policy

REF :

The Department regards it important that there be a clear understanding abroad of the public and Congressional support within the U.S. for this Government's policy on Viet-Nam. In those countries (including Communist countries) where incorrect impressions may exist, Missions should actively seek to correct them.

Public Opinion

For this purpose the following information on public opinion on Viet-Nam (recently transmitted to some posts by Wireless File) should be helpful:

A Harris Survey made in late June indicates that there is widespread support for U.S. policy on Viet-Nam, although a substantial portion of the public has reservations about some aspects of it.

The support is indicated in the replies to the questions below:

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Believe area will go Communist if we don't stand firm in Viet-Nam	79%	5%	16%
Proposal for unconditional negotiations	73%	9%	18%

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Drafted by: FE/RA:JMMillerit

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ARA - Mr. Lister P - Mr. Arzac H - John White

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	Yes	No	Not Sure
Overall approval of President's handling of Viet-Nam problem	62%	33%	5%
Retaliatory bombing of North Viet-Nam	59%	18%	23%
Send more US troops to resist Viet Cong during monsoon season	47%	30%	23%

There is virtually no party difference on sending more troops (Republican 48%; Democrats 47%; Independents 48%).

Some reservations or misgivings are reflected in the replies to the questions below:

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
President's billion dollar aid program (including North Viet-Nam)	42%	35%	23%
Believe defense of South Viet-Nam can be built up to negotiate from strength	41%	33%	26%
If US says Communists ought to get out of places near our border (e.g. Cuba), China has right to demand US get out of Viet-Nam	35%	41%	24%
US might get involved in land war in Asia that it might not win	32%	35%	33%

These results (particularly the first table) should be useful in helping to show that the recent widely publicized "teach-in" and "demonstrations" opposing US policy in Viet-Nam are merely the work of a vocal minority.

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Congressional Support

The government's policy on Viet-Nam has consistently enjoyed impressive bi-partisan Congressional support. Two conspicuous examples of this Congressional backing are the August 10, 1964 Joint Resolution after early August Tonkin Gulf incidents, and the Congressional action on the President's request for a $700 million supplemental appropriation for our military operations in Viet-Nam.

The Joint Resolution, "to promote the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia," approved and supported the determination of the President to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack on forces of the United States, and to prevent further aggression. The Resolution passed 416 to 0 in the House and 88 to 2 in the Senate.

On May 4, 1965, the President sent to Congress a request for an additional $700 million to meet mounting military requirements in Viet-Nam. He asked for the earliest possible action on the request, and the message stated in part as follows: "This is not a routine appropriation. For each Member of Congress who supports this request is also voting to persist in our effort to halt Communist aggression in South Viet-Nam. Each is saying that the Congress and the President stand united before the world in joint determination that the independence of South Viet-Nam shall be preserved and Communist attack will not succeed."

The bill was passed by the House on May 5 by a vote of 408 to 7, and by the Senate on May 6 by a vote of 88 to 3.

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